



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: High Oasis II Solar Project - Exploratory
Project Type: (NO PROJECT REVIEW) SPECIES LIST ONLY
Latitude/Longitude (DMS): 34.314401 / -103.333321
County(s): CURRY; ROOSEVELT
Project Description: Exploratory review solar

REQUESTOR INFORMATION

Project Organization: PRIVATE COMPANY OR CONSULTANT
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OVERALL STATUS

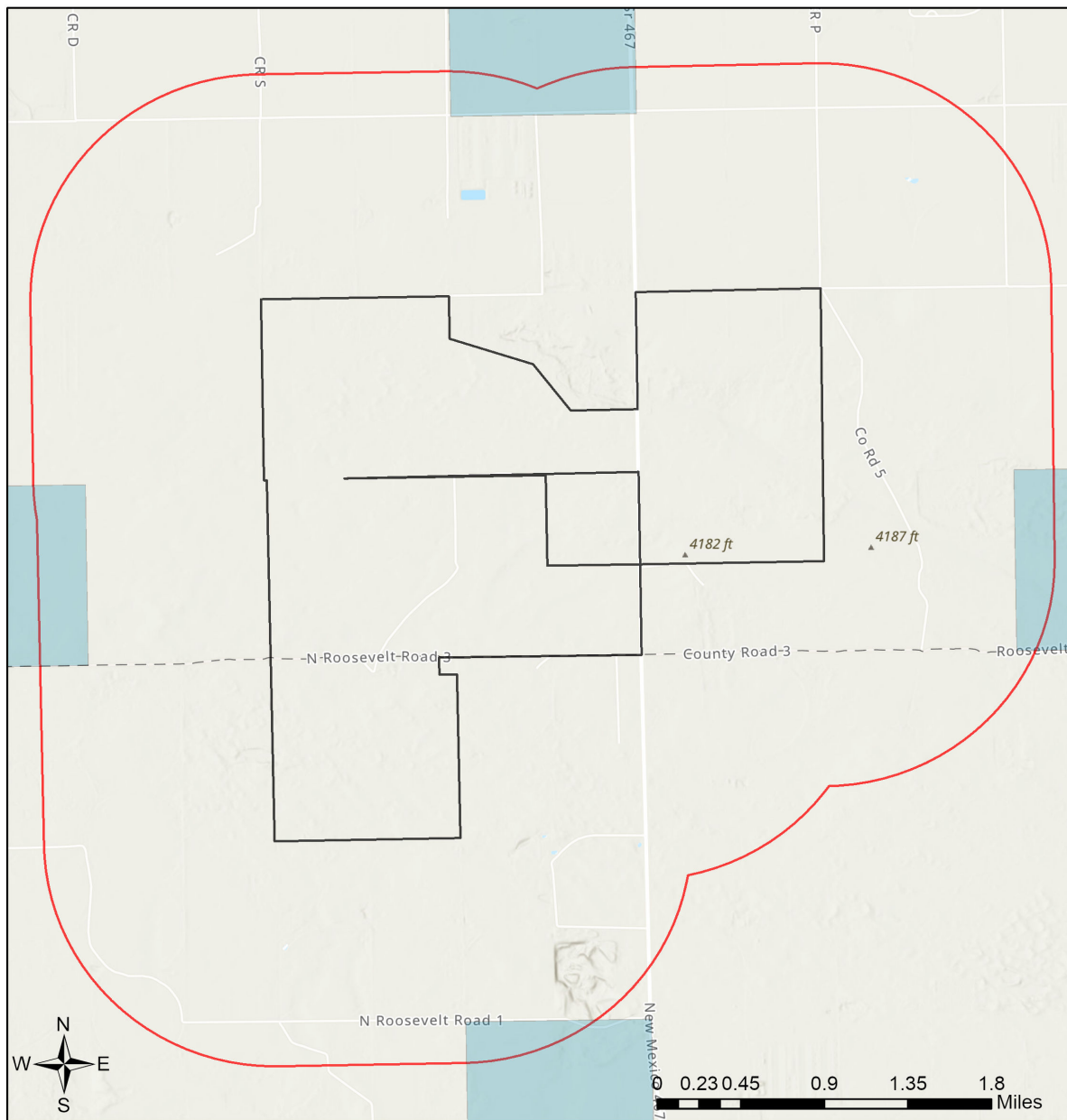
This report contains an initial list of recommendations regarding potential impacts to wildlife or wildlife habitats from the proposed project; see the Project Recommendations section below for further details. Your project proposal is being forwarded to a New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) biologist for review to determine whether there are any additional recommendations regarding the proposed actions. A Department biologist will be in touch within 30 days if there are further recommendations regarding this project proposal.

About this report:

- This environmental review is based on the project description and location that was entered. The report must be updated if the project type, area, or operational components are modified.
- This is a preliminary environmental screening assessment and report. It is not a substitute for the potential wildlife knowledge gained by having a biologist conduct a field survey of the project area. Federal status and plant data are provided as a courtesy to users. The review is also not intended to replace consultation required under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), including impact analyses for federal resources from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) using their [Information for Planning and Consultation tool](#).
- The New Mexico Environmental Review Tool (ERT) utilizes species observation locations and species distribution models, both of which are subject to ongoing change and refinement. Inclusion or omission of a species within a report can not guarantee species presence or absence at a precise point location, as might be indicated through comprehensive biological surveys. Specific questions regarding the potential for adverse impacts to vulnerable wildlife populations or habitats, especially in areas with a limited history of biological surveys, may require further on-site assessments.
- The Department encourages use of the ERT to modify proposed projects for avoidance, minimization, or mitigation of wildlife impacts. However, the ERT is not intended to be used in a repeatedly iterative fashion to adjust project attributes until a previously determined recommendation is generated. The ERT serves to assess impacts once project details are developed. The [New Mexico Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool](#) is the appropriate system for advising early-stage project planning and design to avoid areas of anticipated wildlife concerns and associated regulatory requirements.



High Oasis II Solar Project - Exploratory



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|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Buffered Project Boundary | Department of Energy | State Land Office | U.S. Department of Agriculture |
| Project Boundary | NM Department of Game & Fish | State of New Mexico | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Bureau of Land Management | NM State Forestry Division | Tribal Land | U.S. Forest Service |
| City Land | NM State Parks | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| County Land | National Park Service | U.S. Bureau of Reclamation | |
| Department of Defense | Private | | |

USGS, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), Natural Heritage New Mexico (NHNM), and USDA Forest Service,

Compiled by Richard Norwood of NHNM over the period 2020 to 2021.

Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatasyreisen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community



Special Status Animal Species within 2000 Meters of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMDGF (WCA)	NMDGF SGCN/SERI
Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus		T	SGCN
Lesser Prairie-Chicken	Typanuchus pallidicinctus			SGCN
Mountain Plover	Charadrius montanus			SGCN
Long-Billed Curlew	Numenius americanus			SGCN
Lewis's Woodpecker	Melanerpes lewis			SGCN
Pygmy Nuthatch	Sitta pygmaea			SGCN
Loggerhead Shrike	Lanius ludovicianus			SGCN
Black-Tailed Prairie Dog	Cynomys ludovicianus			SGCN
Cougar	Puma concolor			SERI
Mule Deer	Odocoileus hemionus			SERI
Pronghorn	Antilocapra americana americana			SERI

ESA = Endangered Species Act, WCA = Wildlife Conservation Act, SGCN = Species of Greatest Conservation Need, SERI = Species of Economic and Recreational Importance

Project Recommendations

This report includes a preliminary species list that may be used during early stages of project or conservation planning. Even if this report indicates that your proposed project location would require a custom review from a biologist, **no review will be returned** until additional project details are provided. **To obtain a project review**, please submit additional details regarding the **type** of project, project **objectives**, anticipated project **duration**, **timing** of project construction, the composition and dimensions/quantities of **materials** that will be utilized for project implementation, any **equipment** that will be used, anticipated **ground disturbance** that will occur, wildlife surveys or observations that have occurred on or near the project site, and **any other relevant details** regarding potential effects of project activities on wildlife or wildlife habitat. **Photographs** of the project site are especially useful.

Although this project report may include management recommendations based on the project location, additional conservation measures may be needed. The Department can not fully assess potential effects and associated management recommendations until a **project type and description** have been submitted, and an appropriate **impact buffer** for that project type has been applied. Also, the species list within this report represents an estimation of special status species that could be present at the site of a small-scale project. Species lists for projects that occur across **broader geographic scales** (e.g., one or more counties, multiple habitat types) are more appropriately obtained from the **Department's Biota Information System of New Mexico (BISON-M) database**. Species lists generated by the ERT may contain modeled species distributions in order to predict species occurrences within areas that lack previous wildlife inventories or surveys. This list can be refined using occurrence-based information within BISON-M regarding wildlife-habitat relationships and biological needs for species that might be present within the project footprint.

Our preliminary assessment indicates your project occurs in Lesser Prairie-chicken Crucial Habitat Category 1 (Focal Area).

Our preliminary assessment indicates your project occurs in Lesser Prairie-chicken Crucial Habitat Category 2 (Connectivity Zone).

Our preliminary assessment indicates your project occurs in Lesser Prairie-chicken Crucial Habitat Category 3 (Modeled Habitat Zone).



The Lesser Prairie-chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) (LPC) was designated as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in New Mexico, and has been considered for federal listing as Threatened. The LPC Interstate Working Group has developed the LPC Range-Wide Conservation Plan ([RWP](#)) and Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool ([SGP-CHAT](#)) to designate and prioritize areas for LPC conservation activities and development. Our preliminary assessment indicates your project occurs in LPC habitat.

The Department therefore recommends that you consider enrolling under the LPC Range-Wide Conservation Plan. This plan provides assurances and authorizes incidental take of LPC to participants who voluntarily enroll and fully implement their conservation commitments under the RWP. For additional information on enrolling under the Plan and project planning guidance, contact Grant Beauprez, the Department's Lesser Prairie Chicken Biologist, at (575) 683-0333 or Grant.Beauprez@state.nm.us, or Chanda Pettie, Industry LPC Program Contact with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, at (719) 207-5053 or wafwa.gis@wafwa.org.

Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is known to occur within or near your project area. Before any ground disturbing activities occur, the Department recommends that a preliminary survey be conducted by a qualified biologist using the Department's [burrowing owl survey protocol](#). Should burrowing owls be documented in the project area, please contact the Department or USFWS for further recommendations regarding relocation or avoidance of impacts.

Prairie dog colonies have been mapped within the vicinity of your project area. Both black-tailed prairie dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) and Gunnison's prairie dogs (*Cynomys gunnisoni*) are designated as New Mexico Species of Greatest Conservation Need, and their colonies provide important habitat for other grassland wildlife. Wherever possible, occupied prairie dog colonies should be left undisturbed, and all project activities should be directed off the colony. Any burrows that are located on the project site should be surveyed by a qualified biologist, using this [burrowing owl survey protocol](#), to determine whether burrows are active or inactive and whether burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*) may be utilizing the site. Colonies within the range of the black-tailed prairie dog can be surveyed by a qualified biologist diurnally, year-round using binoculars. Colonies within the range of the Gunnison's prairie dog can be surveyed by a qualified biologist diurnally, using binoculars during the warmer months from April through October and by searching for fairly fresh scat and lack of cobwebs or debris at the mouths of burrows during the cold months (November through March). If ground-disturbing activities cannot be relocated off the prairie dog colony, or if project activities involve control of prairie dogs, the Department recommends live-trapping and relocation of prairie dogs. The Department can provide recommendations regarding suitability of potential translocation areas and procedures.



Disclaimers regarding recommendations:

- The Department provides technical guidance to support the persistence of all protected species of native fish and wildlife, including game and nongame wildlife species. Species listed within this report include those that have been documented to occur within the project area, and others that may not have been documented but are projected to occur within the project vicinity.
- Recommendations are provided by the Department under the authority of § 17-1-5.1 New Mexico Statutes Annotated 1978, to provide "communication and consultation with federal and other state agencies, local governments and communities, private organizations and affected interests responsible for habitat, wilderness, recreation, water quality and environmental protection to ensure comprehensive conservation services for hunters, anglers and nonconsumptive wildlife users".
- The Department has no authority for management of plants or Important Plant Areas. The [New Mexico Endangered Plant Program](#), under the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department's Forestry Division, identifies and develops conservation measures necessary to ensure the survival of plant species within New Mexico. Plant status information is provided within this report as a courtesy to users. Recommendations provided within the ERT may not be sufficient to preclude impacts to rare or sensitive plants, unless conservation measures are identified in coordination with the Endangered Plant Program.
- Additional coordination may also be necessary under the federal ESA or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Further site-specific recommendations may be proposed during ESA and/or NEPA analyses, or through coordination with affected federal agencies.